

# SMPC Now

## OUR JOURNEY THROUGH A TRYING TIME

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"I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Ephesians 4:1-3



Incarceration or Incarnation. To a certain extent that is the daily choice before us regardless of context, and it is no less true as we "shelter in place." Yes, both the challenges and consequences of this surreal period of sequestration will evolve and remain with us for some time. Yet, though we may be tossed into a ping-pong match between anxiety and woe, with hardship and loss standing at the ready for their turn at the table, we do have some sway over how and with whom we will face it. Though we don't know what tomorrow may bring, much less next month, we can know with whom we will get through it. We do not have to allow our circumstances to incarcerate our hearts, our spirits, our faith, our joy. Through the grace of Christ and the fellowship of the church, we are still

free to celebrate life and rejoice in the relationships we share at SMPC. As Donna Rogers, our communications director phrased it, "The buildings may be closed, but the church is wide open." In this issue of *SMPC Now*, you will find a host of opportunities to connect and engage the life we share together in Christ.

Join us for worship on Sunday at 10:10 a.m. via the livestream available on the home page of our website. Our platform provider has assured us that we will not experience the glitch that interrupted our service last week. Well within the guidelines prescribed by our county and state, a small single-digit group of staff and volunteers, with appropriate distance between us, will broadcast our live online worship service. If you are not able to get online at that time, the worship broadcast will remain available through our website and Facebook page. Then, throughout the week there will be a number of online opportunities to connect for study, prayer, conversation, music, and more. Just this morning a group of 20 gathered online via Zoom for our Wednesday Morning Bible Study. We'd love for you to join us next Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. Just email me and we'll add you to the list.

Remember, with the incarnation of Jesus Christ, our Lord declared that he would be called Immanuel, which means, God with us. Folks, God wasn't kidding. These are unusual times and our crucial efforts to flatten the curve of COVID-19 may restrain us, but they need not contain us. So, stay home, stay safe for yourselves and your neighbors, **and** stay connected. Yes, the buildings are closed but SMPC, in so many ways, is wide open. Peace be with you.

Grace and Peace,

Matt





## Prayer for the People, March 22, 2020

Dr. Matt Brown

Sheltered in place and space, a pensive world steps outside walls closing in, and there in open air, hears a cardinal singing your praise, O Lord, its full and proud chest, festooned in brilliant beefeater red, reminding us that our real and present dangers cannot restrict your movement among us, nor cheapen your promises to us, nor sap your love for us, nor debilitate your work in and through us. We have no reason to mute our praise for you or betray our trust in you.

We give you thanks for creative or newly found ways to strengthen the ties that bind us. Whether gathering at the square table of Zoom or Meeting Up with colleagues or finding some Facetime with the grandparents, we are grateful for the brilliant ways the basic elements of your creation have been merged to build instruments that connect us even when the space between us is vast. We give you thanks for the retreat to the simpler ways of connection: the walk through the neighborhood, the family board game, the actual, for real conversation. Though travel has been curtailed and reservations canceled, the act of sitting down to read a book frees us and takes us to distant destinations, immersing us in adventures amazing, harrowing, healing, heartrending, and spirit stretching. We thank you for words that lift, inspire, educate, challenge, entertain, and transform.

Omniscient Lord, you know our anxieties, concerns, and hopes for self and others completely. You know the hidden and weakened folds in our hearts. You know the doubts and fears of all our years. You perceive the fragility of our faith, and in Your Son you felt the pain of our suffering. And yet, you do not fail to see us with eyes of compassion and a heart of mercy, and so, O Lord, we dare to pray, knowing that even in our muddled petitions you hear clearly and love us deeply. And so we pray. We pray for wisdom in a time of confusion. Confronted with the microscopic, breath stealing foe, we pray for the ill and at risk. We pray for weary nurses, overwhelmed physicians, grieving families, frightened healthcare workers, frantic researchers, scrambling administrators. For all whose work and decisions and clarity of purpose affect the lives of many, grant them wisdom, strength, endurance and compassion. For the patient, for the health compromised, for the at risk, hold them close and grant them the peace of your presence.

For those who feel their world quaking as the reality of closure and cancellation threaten their work, their income, their sustainability, we pray for their welfare and we pray for their support by the communities surrounding them. We pray for those who were already disenfranchised or broken or lonely. May their spirits be lifted through the grace of their neighbors and the fellowship of your church.

May our own efforts in these uncertain days always be marked by compassion, humility, mercy, grace, patience, forbearance, kindness, and generosity. We lift these prayers to you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Shepherd Redeemer. Amen.



# SPIRITUAL FORMATION MINISTRY

*from the desk of Rebecca Guzman, Director of Spiritual Formation*



Listen to this week's FaithCAST!

This week's episode will focus on Ezekiel 37:1-4.

*Click the image on the left to listen.*



[Contact Rebecca Guzman here.](#)



## Worship Supplies for March 29:

Please note the list of simple supplies for your kids to gather for this Sunday's worship.

I will give them instructions during the children's message for an activity to do so you can keep participating.

[Click here to LIVE STREAM Sunday's worship service at 10:10 a.m.](#)

TO ENHANCE YOUR  
WORSHIP EXPERIENCE,  
PLEASE GATHER:

PUZZLE OR  
BLOCKS/LEGOS  
OR BUILDING TOYS

PAPER

CRAYONS

## Wednesday Bedtime Bible Stories Beginning April 1, 7:30 p.m. Facebook

Join us as we read the Bible story together for the upcoming Sunday.

My daughter and I will be wearing our pajamas and invite you to snuggle up with your family and listen together. I will provide one question to talk about and a bedtime prayer.



[Tune in to our Facebook page  
Wednesday, April 1 at 7:30 p.m. by  
clicking here.](#)



**Resumes Sunday, April 5**  
*Details coming soon!*



# YOUTH MINISTRY

*from the desk of Rev. Jessica Tidwell, Director of Youth Ministry*

- ♦ Do you receive the Tuesday youth e-news? If not, please let Pastor Jessica Tidwell know at [jessica@smpchome.org](mailto:jessica@smpchome.org)
- ♦ Do you get youth ministry texts? If not, please text @smpcyouth to 81010.
- ♦ Do you follow our social media accounts?  
[facebook.com/southmeckenburgpresbyterian](https://facebook.com/southmeckenburgpresbyterian)

@revjt on Instagram (Jessica's personal Instagram)



[Contact  
Rev. Jessica Tidwell  
here.](#)



## SMPC Youth Hang Out ONLINE

Sunday, March 29

5:00 P.M., ZOOM

Scavenger Hunt! Join our ZOOM meeting around 4:50 p.m. and be ready to begin our devotion and prayer at 5:00 p.m.

*CLICK THE IMAGE ON THE LEFT TO JOIN IN! (<https://zoom.us/j/571399561>)*



## Youth Prayer

Wednesday, April 1

4:00 p.m., Instagram Live

Youth are invited to hop onto @smpcyouth and participate in the weekly prayer offered by SMPC staff.

*CLICK THE IMAGE ON THE LEFT TO JOIN IN! (<https://www.instagram.com/>)*



## BYG (Big Youth Group)

Sunday, April 5

5:00 p.m., ZOOM

Youth will gather on Zoom for a large group devotional, before splitting into small groups with adult advisors. We will tackle the question together, "Why is a faith community important?"

The youth aren't letting physical distancing stop us! We gathered on ZOOM together, led by youth leaders Hank and Jake, to pray and make SERVICE BINGO cards for the week. The first youth to BLACKOUT their card will get a special shout out! What a blast, and it was awesome to see everyone's faces!

~ Pastor Jessica

*This week, they will have a ZOOM Scavenger Hunt using their homes and yards!*





# CONGREGATIONAL CARE MINISTRY

*from the desk of Rev. Whitney Bayer, Associate Pastor*



The Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the President and Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency have written a pastoral letter to Presbyterians living with the rapidly-spreading coronavirus pandemic. A portion of the letter, written by the Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, and the Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett, is as follows:



*Dear Siblings in Christ,*

*These are truly trying times for all of us as we face a rapidly spreading virus, panic buying that has left grocery shelves nearly empty and supplies in great demand. We have seen the worst in people and the best. Yet, through it all, we take hope in Christ and the promise to never leave us.*

*We are holding each of you in prayer. Like the rest of the country, our Presbyterian communities are physically separated, but we are still deeply connected through our common humanity, spirituality and strong faith in God.*

For the remainder of the letter: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/these-are-trying-times-for-all-of-us/>

[Contact  
Rev. Whitney Bayer here.](#)

## ADDITIONAL AVENUES OF CARE AND COMFORT

**FAITH 5:** Continue looking for God's movement in your daily life, and catch up on that together with a daily devotion, using [Faith5's Pandemic Hope: A Family Devotional for Life During COVID-19](#).

**SMPC Pen Pals:** Children, youth, and college aged students – consider signing up to be a pen pal to one another.

Sign up to be an SMPC Pen Pal here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0e4ea5a928a31-20202>

**Letter Writing:** Sign up to send letters or make phone calls to a member who is older and is isolated. Once you sign up, Rebecca will match you with a buddy!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0e4ea5a928a31-letter>

**Encourage a Graduating Senior:** Choose a high school or college senior to encourage. This year is not going the way they thought.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4EA5A928A31-encourage>

## Daily Moment of Prayer at Noon

Every day at noon, we encourage you to pause in your schedule to pray The Lord's Prayer. If you have children at home, include them as well. Our hope is that the familiar words of this prayer will comfort us, help us feel close to God and the larger faith community, and remind us of our connection to one another, even though we're not gathering together in person.

*Suggestion: set an alarm on your phone!*



# MUSIC MINISTRY

*from the desk of Zach Bowyer, Director of Music & Organist*

## Evensong: A Musical Offering

Facebook Premier Begins Friday, March 27, 7:30 p.m.

Originating in the early Christian Church, Evensong is a form of worship practiced in the evening that is focused on prayer and music. Here at SMPC, we will be using our new Evensong series of videos on [Facebook](#) as a brief pause to the hectic and unprecedented time we all currently endure together.

This week's Evensong features Paul Cardall's "Day of Rest," a solo piano work in Cardall's The Hymns Collection, an assortment of hymns and solo pieces. While "Day of Rest" is not based on a hymn tune, the static, original melody at the beginning of the work is complimented by flowing harmonies that come towards the middle of the piece. Cardall creates some tension while moving in and out of major and minor keys and exploring different rhythmic variations. At the conclusion of the work, the main melody comes back in while soaring towards the higher register of the keyboard. The piece ends in stillness as the flowing accompaniment climbs from the bottom of the keyboard to the serene peaks of the upper octaves.



How can we find rest in these frantic times? Listen to Cardall's composition for a brief time of rest and serenity and then reflect on that feeling. Your reflections and remembrances of that repose will stay with you in the days and weeks to come.

[Tune in to our Facebook page Friday, March 27 at 7:30 p.m. by clicking here.](#)



[Contact Zach Bowyer here.](#)

*from the desk of Nancy Metzler, Director of Hospitality & Connection*

In this time of stay in place and social distancing, SMPC continues to offer a wide variety of opportunities to support you and to help you feel connected with your church family. If you're not sure where to begin, please contact me, and I'll help you get started. Through the gift of technology, available options include Bible studies, small group gatherings, and "square table" conversations, for all ages and stages. In new and creative ways, we're continuing to be in community with each other despite our physical separation!

Also through the gift of technology, our Session continues to meet and welcome new members. If you're considering membership and would like to know more, please contact me, and I can share information and walk you through the details about how this works. We'd love for you to join our church family in this nontraditional yet meaningful way!

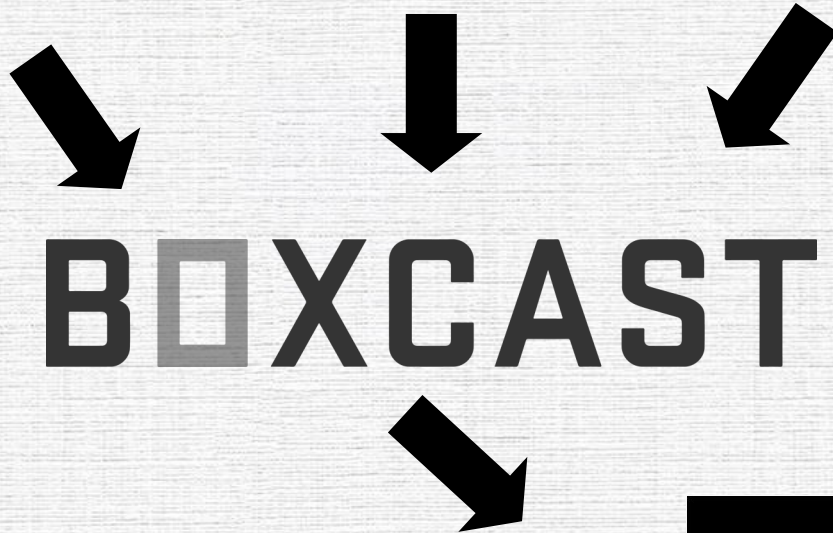


[Contact Nancy Metzler here.](#)



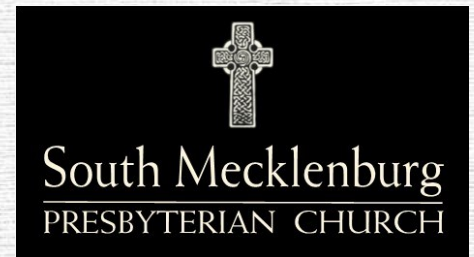
# Staying Connected

**Roku**  **amazon** **fireTV**



If you have ROKU, Apple TV, or Amazon Fire TV, you will now find SMPC among the offerings on the BOXCAST channel.

- ◆ Initialize your streaming service. (ROKU, Apple TV, or Amazon Fire TV)
- ◆ Find BOXCAST in your Channel Store, adding it to your channels.
- ◆ Open the BOXCAST channel, and search for *South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church*.
- ◆ You may watch live or choose past worship services.
- ◆ Using your remote, choose SMPC as a "favorite".



## THANK YOU!

*During this extraordinary time, we wish to thank Kari and Harrison Case along with Gary Rawls for their commitment in making sure our sound, camera, and streaming are running smoothly during our live streaming worship services!*

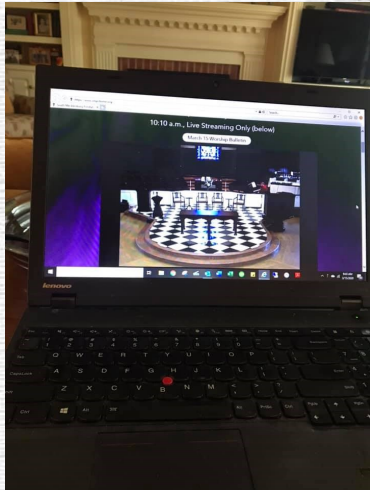




# Staying Connected

South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church is employing various avenues of technology to keep us connected and informed.

Our worship staff, careful to maintain social distance, are gathering in our Sanctuary on Sunday mornings to create a worship experience through live streaming. Access to live streaming has been expanded across several communication channels to make it even easier to join in worship.



Our website, [www.smpchome.org](http://www.smpchome.org) has been revamped to shift our live and past worship services to the forefront. From the home page of the website, we can join in worship, view the worship bulletin, and participate in online giving. Our website is viewable in both desktop and mobile versions.



We are also taking full advantage of our existing Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/southmecklenburgpresbyterian](https://www.facebook.com/southmecklenburgpresbyterian)) by live streaming our worship service, sharing announcements and updates, and creating "Noon Prayer", a Facebook Live video leading us in prayer at 12:00 p.m. each Wednesday. Be sure to "like" our page.



If you use the streaming services ROKU, Apple TV, or Amazon Fire TV, you can now view our live and past worship services by adding BOXCAST from your channel store. Search for "South Mecklenburg Presbyterian Church", mark it as favorite, and watch from your television. (See instructions on the next page.)



Our staff, committees, studies and groups are using ZOOM, a video conferencing platform to meet "face-to-face". If your group is interested in this format, please contact Rev. Jessica Tidwell, [jessica@smpchome.org](mailto:jessica@smpchome.org), or Rebecca Guzman, [rebecca@smpchome.org](mailto:rebecca@smpchome.org), for details.





# ONLINE GIVING

Many of our donors feel a connection to the church's work when they are able to place their gift in our offering plates and then dedicate those offerings through prayer with the congregation. This is an important practice and an important part of our worship services. Many other donors appreciate the convenience and discipline of online giving, and those gifts, too, are dedicated through prayer during the worship services each week. For the next several weeks, while meeting together is not possible, the church would like to encourage either **online giving** (options and instructions below) or **mailing gifts** to our P.O. Box 79321, Charlotte, NC 28271.

*For questions or help with online giving, contact Mary Katheryne Zagora in the church office, [mkzagora@smpchome.org](mailto:mkzagora@smpchome.org) or 704-544-0404 ext 116.*

## To give online:

1. Click HERE: <https://secure.accessacs.com/access/oglogin.aspx?sn=138679>
2. Enter the amount you would like to give, and then select a fund from the drop-down menu.

*Most gifts will be to the Operating Fund. For Spoon it Up donations, select "Other" and type Spoon it Up in the memo box.*

3. Enter your email address and click continue. On the next screen you will be prompted to enter your debit card, credit card, or bank account information.
4. Click "Give."

## To give via text:

1. Text SMPC to 73256.
2. Click the link in the reply text you will receive.
3. Enter the amount you would like to give and tap the "Text Gifts" box.
4. You will be prompted to enter your debit card, credit card, or bank account information.
5. Click "Give."

## To set up a recurring online gift:

1. Log in to ChurchLife and select "Give Online" from the "Giving" drop down menu.
2. Enter the amount you would like to give, and then select a fund from the drop-down menu.
3. Choose the frequency of your gift amount (weekly, semi-monthly, monthly, quarterly).
4. Enter your debit card, credit card, or bank account information and click "Give."





As you know, SMPC recently embarked on our 2020-2025 *From Strength to Strength* capital campaign, implemented to raise \$3.25 million and to pay off our sanctuary mortgage. Because of the challenges of a continuously evolving health environment, we have adjusted our capital campaign plans and, for now, have paused our campaign efforts.

Once we are able to resume our normal schedule and join together in person for worship services and church programs, we will restart our capital campaign activities. We will extend the end date of the campaign so that the entire congregation can hear about our campaign goal and mission and participate in campaign events.

For clarity, payments on pledges to our previous 2017-2020 *Room to Dream* capital campaign end in April. The proceeds from the 2020-2025 *From Strength to Strength* capital campaign will be used to pay our mortgage payments starting in May.

We are blessed to have both a capital reserve fund and some members who have pre-funded their contributions to this *From Strength to Strength* campaign. These balances will allow us to continue to service our mortgage while the campaign is on hold. Thank you so much to these early contributors! We are hopeful that we will be ready to resume our campaign in late May or early June, but we will not begin until conditions are appropriate.

In the meantime, we ask that you continue to pray for our church, our church leaders, our community and our world. In words taken from our *From Strength to Strength* campaign prayer:

*"Gracious God, you are the giver of all things. You are our sustainer, our hope, and our rock... we are grateful that you claim us as your people and know us each by name, having drawn us to this common calling we share in Jesus Christ...we continue to go from strength to strength as we lean on your strength to sustain us in the mystery of our call and purpose...with instilled faith, hope, love and perseverance we continue to wait and work to your glory. Amen."*



South Mecklenburg  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

8601 Bryant Farms Road  
Charlotte, NC 28277

